

*R London*  
*Company of Watermen &c.* 816. m. 7  
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# The Watermens Case,

In Relation to the BILL for Increase and  
Encouragement of Seamen.

**I**N the Bill for Encouragement of Seamen, the Register for them is made Voluntary, as fearing that an Act to force them into a Register would be so great an Infringement of Liberty, as might discourage and obviate the future Breeding of Seamen, and cause many of the present, either to decline going to Sea, or betake themselves to the Service of some Foreign State. For which Reasons 'tis Humbly hoped, That the said Register may be made Voluntary to the Watermen as well as others; since the forcing them thereinto, will much Discourage, and be the Ruine of many of the present Company of Watermen, That are more subject to, and have suffered more by the Sea-Service, than any other Society, and may put a great stop to the future Breeding of Watermen. Whereas the said Company now is one of the best Seminaries for Breeding up Youth to the Sea, and is computed to have afforded above 4000 Voluntiers and Pressed Men for the Navy, since His Majesty's Happy Accession to the Crown.

It's therefore Humbly submitted to the great Wisdom of this present Parliament, Whether it might not highly conduce towards the Furnishing the Navy with great Numbers of Able Men, and thereby better promote the good purposes of the designed Registering of Seamen.

1. If the Watermen were allowed to continue their being Registered in their own Company as they now all are.

2. And all Lightermen, Bargemen, and others employed in Rowing on the River Thames (Fishermen and Trinitymen excepted) be Incorporated with the Watermen into one Body Politique, and be Registered in the same Manner, and under the same Penalties, as the Watermen now are; which Register may from time to time (as required) be transmitted unto the Admiralty. Whereby a more Exact and full List of all Watermen may be more speedily had, and with less Charge than others can procure, that do not know or are conversant amongst the Watermen.

3. And several Thousands of Stout and Able Men, as Lightermen, Bargemen, &c. will be added, and made forth coming, more than the Registering Bill comprehends, or seems to have any notice of. Which Persons being now subject to no Order or Regulation, withdraw and absent themselves in times of Pressing, and commit many other Irregularities on the River, which cannot by any means be so certainly and readily prevented, as by Uniting such persons unto, and bringing them under the same Orders and Regulations with the Watermen. For the Barges now leave their lusty and able Men at Kingston, &c. and are brought from thence to London with Old Men only.

And the Young and Able Lightermen hide and withdraw from their Employments, until the Press is over, which makes Wages very dear, obstructs Trade, and raises the price of Provision, Fewel, &c. which tends to the prejudice of all, especially the poorer sort.

4. A great many more Substantial and considerable Persons will be then added to the Watermens Company; for want whereof, and good By-Laws, with reasonable Penalties, for punishing Offenders, many Abuses have formerly been committed, the Company's Stock misapplied and embezzelled, (none being qualified to Sue for the same) and the Charities of several discouraged or diverted. Which then it's hoped will be effectually prevented, and the Income thereby considerably increased, and duly applied for Relief and Support of the Decayed and Disabled Members of the said Company, and the Widows of such, and in Educating and Breeding up their poor and helpless Children in the Art of Navigation, to the great Increase and Encouragement of Seamen, Advantage of Trade, and Security of the Kingdom.